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The Economics of a Russian Village. By ISAAC A. HOURWICH, Ph. D. Pp. 182. Price \$1.00. Columbia College Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, Vol. II, No. 1. New York, 1893.

This monograph is one of a kind to delight the hearts of students of practical economics. From beginning to end it is a record of solid work, alike in the way of original research and of constructive synthesis. We shall not be wrong if we assume that Mr. Hourwich has had special opportunities of prosecuting the investigations which have culminated in this book, for everywhere there are signs of a familiarity with his subject that convince one that he must not only have studied on the spot, but have done so with ample facilities for getting at the bottom of the many questions of practical life which are here raised.

It would be impossible, without claiming much more space than can be allowed to this notice, to enter into a discussion of the important facts which Mr. Hourwich brings into prominence, and we must be content with a brief statement of the lines which his work follows.

Beginning with a brief account of what he calls "Peasantism," by which he means the agrarian ferment, which began owing to the manner in which the emancipation of the serfs was carried out, he gives us a lucid and valuable sketch of the development of land owning in Russia, explaining in passing the testamentary arrangements which were in vogue under the old order of things, and the inauguration of private property in land and serfage. These latter were finally recognized in Russia as institutions of private law by a ukase of Peter III., in 1762. In dealing with the emancipation movement, which culminated in the great reform of 1861, he brings out the fact, which is not always borne in mind, that the freeing of the serfs was in part, at any rate, the result of fear at the growing unrest of the peasantry, and did not altogether proceed from motives of humanity and enlightenment. "We must free the peasants from above before they begin to free themselves from below," said Alexander II. to his assembly of nobles in 1858. Happily he had the strength of will to carry out the measure whose necessity he had long foreseen. How far did economic considerations bear upon the Emperor of those days? Mr. Hourwich that tells us economic conditions were ripe for the change.

"After the Crimean war it became obvious to the government that Russia, with her old-fashioned methods of transportation, could play no prominent part in the European concert." Now it was perfectly evident that an extensive system of railways could not possibly be supported out of the resources of agriculture alone, in a country in which nine-tenths of the people were serfs, either of the State or of the landlords, and had to bear out of their scanty income the expenses of a

large military State, and of an aristocracy. Industry and commerce were necessary for the maintenance of the State. The emancipation of the peasants was the scheme to attract domestic and foreign capital to industrial pursuits in Russia. By placing money in the hands of the landlords it was sought to promote the progress of agriculture, and the growth of industries intimately connected therewith. By setting at liberty twenty million serfs, who were the subjects of the landlords, wage-workers were created for industrial enterprises. The economic significance of the reform of February 19, (March 3), 1861, lies in the fact, that, on the one hand, it completed the evolution of private property in land, and that, on the other hand, it effected at a single blow the expropriation of the peasantry on a large scale."

Considering the effects of the emancipation of the peasants, Mr. Hourwich mentions facts which demonstrate forcibly that they have been, in many respects, the reverse of those which were predicted. It is perhaps not to be wondered at that there are found even to-day—nearly a quarter of a century later—Russians of eminence and even of intelligence who are unconvinced as to the wisdom of the great liberation. The present writer had an interesting conversation with a nobleman in Russia only two years ago, wherein the emancipatory edict was deplored as a cause of untold harm both to peasantry and nobility. It may not be amiss to recall his argument.

"The peasants," he said, "were not ready for independence. They should have preparatory training. The right thing was to have educated the children of the peasants then living, and to have freed them as soon as that had been done. Instead of that the Czar emancipated a race of people who were unfit to be made independent, who could not stand alone, but needed keeping in restraint. Good results will follow, but they have not come yet. The peasants are ignorant—not naturally stupid, but merely untaught—and they do not know how to look after their own interests. They have no foresight, they are improvident, they have no means of learning enlightened methods of agriculture, and, worst of all, they are idle. Give them *vodka* (brandy) and they are satisfied. Then, too, their taxes are high—often oppressive. It is true that with emancipation they received a certain amount of land, but the taxes they have to pay—taxes which formerly fell upon the noble—frequently exceed a fair rent. Moreover, the land which falls to the peasants of a village is often inadequate to their support, and all are kept in poverty. Formerly, when a serf met with misfortune—as by the loss of a cow or a horse—he went to the noble and was soon out of difficulty. Now he has no one to go to in distress. He has to deal with the tax-gatherer, who knows nothing of benevolence.

While before the emancipation the peasant was serf of a noble, now he is the serf of the police. That is the only difference."

"But," he added with an air of satisfaction, "we have no urban proletariat in Russia. The emancipation has saved us from that." Yet only partially, however, as Mr. Hourwich here shows. It is interesting to note, by the way, that serfdom existed as late as the year 1892, though the last remnant was then abolished by an edict wherein the Kalmyks, a semi-nomadic tribe of no fewer than 150,000 men in South-east Russia, near the Caspian Sea, ceased to be the serfs of the chiefs (the *zaisangs* and *noyons*) as hitherto.

In dealing with the practical aspect of the communal land system, the author wisely confines his attention to typical districts. His consideration of this branch of his subject is marked by great thoroughness and the information he gives travels over ground which, so far as we are aware, has not been touched by other writers on Russian economies. Speaking of the industry and capacity of the peasantry, he mentions the fact that the Russian cultivator produces far less corn per acre than the agriculturist of any other country. The following table is very significant :

	YIELD PER ACRE			
	RYE		OATS	
	Bushels	Per Cent	Bushels	Per Cent
Russia (an average district) . . .	8.9	100	10.7	100
United States	11.9	134	26.6	249
Ontario, Canada	15.5	174	30.7	287
Great Britain	16.1	181	40.3	377
France	14.7	165	26.1	244
Germany	14.5	163	30.1	287
Austria	13.8	155	17.6	164
Hungary			17.4	163

Among the reasons for the lack of intensive cultivation are the faulty allotment of the communal lands and the chronic bankruptcy of a large part of the communes and of the peasantry. The author goes as far as to state that it is the established rule in Russia that the burden of taxation is in inverse ratio to the means of the taxpayer. He writes:

"The former serf is taxed more absolutely (every male and every

worker) and relatively (every acre of land) than is the former State peasant. The difference is really the tribute paid to the landlord class as a due for the emancipation of their serfs. Indeed the greater part of the contribution of the former serf is composed either of his redemption tax or of the payment due to his master (*taille*) On the other hand, the least amount in taxes is paid by those among the former serfs who have already redeemed their lots or who have received the so-called donated lots, *i. e.*, the least is levied from those who are free from the obligation to their former master."

Verily unto him that hath is given, and from him that hath not is taken away even that he hath! The result of all this is that there is a gradual tendency for the independent—or the nominally independent—farmer to become an agricultural laborer. As the author puts it, "Land tenure is degenerating into wage labor." And no wonder, when the laws and institutions are so framed as to grind down the weak and protect the strong. A policy of greater short-sightedness could not be conceived. Another result, however, is the migration from the land to the towns of those who no longer entertain the hope or the wish to be tillers of the soil. In other words, the creation of an urban proletariat is beginning.

We can only mention the chapters on the dissolution of the patriarchal family, the modern agricultural classes, and the re-division of the common land. Summarizing the results of his inquiries, Mr. Hourwich says: "Family co-operation, village community, nobility, and natural economy—such was the economic constitution of Russia in the past. The Russia of the days to come will have for its basis a peasant *bourgeoisie*, a rural proletariat, and capitalistic agriculture."

Though the work is somewhat technical in character, the author's elucidations are admirable. Certainly he allows himself at times to nod, as when he tells us that "at the dawn of the evolution of mankind the individual had not yet differentiated from the social aggregate," a long-winded involution for a very simple idea. Again, when he claims the right to speak of people destitute of husbandry as "husbandless" because Shakespeare did so, one feels bound to point out that in economic and all scientific writings the most scrupulous care should be used in terminology, and that novelty is only justified by sheer necessity. But these will appear minor matters in view of the solid value of this work. It should be added that a very useful feature of the book is a careful and exhaustive series of statistics, which of itself proves the enormous amount of labor which the preparation of the monograph must have involved. Unfortunately the area to which the statistics refer is very small when compared with the vastness of

the entire Russian Empire, and this fact minimizes their value and prevents them from having a general application. Again, most of the figures admittedly date from some years ago, though this is no wonder, seeing that Russia is one great European country which has not become awake to the importance of the science of statistics.

WILLIAM HARBUTT DAWSON.

Grundbegriffe und Grundlagen der Volkswirtschaft. Von Dr. JULIUS LEHR. Price 9 M. Leipzig: Hirschfeld, 1893.

This book, written by Dr. Lehr and edited by Kuno Frankenstein, forms the introduction to the first volume of a large work upon political science. The whole work is to embrace the entire department of political science, and will be completed in thirty volumes. Its plan embraces far more than Schönberg's manual, and in a certain sense also, more than Conrad's Dictionary. Each individual volume is intended to form a complete whole by itself, and may be bought separately.

In the first division, the entire science of political economy, theoretical and practical, and the history of political economy and of socialism are treated. The second part contains the treatment of the science of finance, the third the theory of the state and the science of administration, the fourth that of statistics. The work by Dr. Lehr, in which the series is begun, is not intended to exhaust the entire subject of "theoretical national economy;" but rather to present the present social and legal organization as the basis of the production, distribution and use of goods. Then such fundamental concepts as value, property, wealth, and cost, and an economy are discussed. In two later volumes will follow the theory of production and consumption and the distribution of property. The theories of value and price are treated by the author in a most exhaustive manner. The whole work is thorough and ingenious; the presentation of the individual theories is very complete, and in accordance with the latest literature. In connection with every volume, there is a comprehensive bibliography, a review of the entire literature of the subject under discussion. Unfortunately the author lessens the value of his presentation by using the mathematical method extensively. On this account, it will be a poor "introduction to the study;" a good deal of mathematical knowledge will be necessary to understand the many formulæ. Though such a mathematical treatment may properly be employed in a monograph or a special investigation, it at least seems out of place in a work designed to present the principles of economics to a wide